

Lady ISABELLA's Tragedy:

O R, T H E

Step-Mother's Cruelty.



THere was a Lord of worthy fame,
And a hunting he would ride,
Attended by a noble train
Of gentry by his side.
And whilst he did in chace remain,
To see both sport and play.
His Lady went, as she did feign,
Unto the church to pray.
This Lord he had a daughter fair,
Whose beauty shone so bright.
She was belov'd both far and near,
Of many a lord and Knight.
Fair Isabella was she call'd,
A creature fair was she.
She was her father's only joy,
As after you shall see.
But yet her cruel step-mother
Did envy her so much,

That day by day she sought her life,
Her malice it was such.
She bargain'd with the master-cook
To take her life away;
And calling of her daughter dear,
She thus to her did say:
Go home, sweet daughter, I thee pray,
Go hasten presently,
And tell unto the master-cook
These words which I tell thee.
Go bid him dress for dinner strait,
The fair and milk-white doe,
That in the park doth shine so bright,
There's none so fair a shew.
This lady fearing of no harm,
Obey'd her mother's will,
And presently she hasten'd home,
The same for to fulfil.

She strait into the kitchen went,
Her message for to tell,
And there she spy'd the master-cook,
Who did with malice swell.
Now master cook, it must be so,
Do that which I thee tell,
You needs must dress the milk-white doe,
Which you do know full well.
Then strait his bloody cruel hands,
He on the lady laid,
Who quivering and shaking stands.
Whilst thus to her he said,
Thou art the doe that I must dress,
See here, behold the knife;
For it is pointed presently
To rid thee of thy life.
O! then cries out the scullion boy,
As loud as loud might be.
O save her life, good master cook,
And make your pies of me.
For heaven's sake do not murder
My mistress with that knife;
You know she is her father's pride.
For Christ's sake save her life.
I will not save her life, said he,
Nor make my pies of thee,
And if you do this deed betray,
Thy butcher I will be.
Now when the lord he did come home,
For to sit down to eat.
He called for his daughter dear,
To come and carve his meet.
Into some nunnery she is gone,
Your daughter now forget,
Then solemnly he made a vow
Before the company,
That he would neither eat nor drink,
Before he did her see.
O then bespoke the scullion boy,
With a voice so loud and high.
If that you would your daughter see,
Good sir, cut up the pye.
Wherein her flesh is minced small,
And parched by the fire:
All caused by the step-mother,
Who did her death desire,
And curst be the master cook,
O curst may he be.

I profferedh im my own heart's blood
From death to set her free.
Then all in black this lord did mourn,
And for his daughter's sake,
He judg'd the cruel step-mother
To be burnt at a stake.
Likewise he judg'd the master cook
In boiling oil to stand,
And made the simple scullion boy,
The heir to all his land.

Their LAMENTATION.

NOW when the wicked master cook
Beheld his death draw near,
And that by friends he was forfook,
He pour'd forth many a tear.
Saying, the lady whom I serv'd,
Prompted to this deed:
And as a death I have deserv'd,
Is coming on with speed.
I must confess these hands of mine
Did kill the innocent:
When her dear breath she did resign,
My heart did not relent.
This said, Into the boiling oil
He then forthwith was cast.
And then, within a little time,
The mother went at last,
From prison to the burning stake,
And as she pass'd along,
She did sad lamentation make,
Unto the numerous throng.
These were the self same words she said,
The daughter of my lord
I doom'd to death, the laws I broke,
And shall have my reward.
Then to the burning stake they ty'd
The worst of all step-dame's,
Where she according to the law,
Did perish in the flames.
Now let their deaths a warning be
To all that hear this song.
And thus I end my tragedy,
The duke he mourned long.

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